

Forces

Volume 2014

Article 40

5-1-2014

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Recommended Citation

Gress, Brodie (2014) "Those Nights of Broken China and Tissues Thrown Away," *Forces*: Vol. 2014 , Article 40.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2014/iss1/40>

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Those Nights of Broken China and Tissues Thrown Away

BRODIE GRESS

One evening in a beat-up car,
she cried into his shoulder.
He was a tissue she wouldn't throw away,
though he wished she would,
wanting to shake the unrequited love
out of his best friend.
Her foot curled around his for warmth
while he scraped for tears to shed for her.
Some boy had broke her heart. Again.

Years later in that beat-up car,
he would kick and break its dashboard,
letting moonlight expose
the fuses, prongs, and wires
that he wished to coil around the neck
of another boy who'd left him seizing up
with aroused and forlorn nerves.
He let his foot fall slow as a dirge
as his pain superseded him.

He'd remember, in that beat-up car,
that night when his friend finally quit crying.
Her orange window light beckoned them
inside. She grabbed the white china
her ex had bought her,
and threw it against the wall.
They smiled
and cleaned every shard
off the floor, with the smooth exhalation
of knowing their feet were safe from wounds.

But the night inside his beat-up car
when his foot throbbed and froze on the mat,
he wanted to crack the sunroof, too,
shatter the windshield, tear up the headrest
until the beat-up car collapsed on him
because that would suffice until morning
came, when he could pretend he was fine.
That night he wished for china he could break.
Or a tissue he hadn't thrown away.



DAYDREAMING TERRY WHITE